

DETAILED ACTION

1. This is the answer to an IDS and a pre-amendment filed on 8/31/2006.
2. Claims 12-22 are pending; claims 1-11 were canceled.

Priority

3. Applicant claims a Germany priority of 3 May 2004, and an EPO PCT 2/16/2005

Information Disclosure Statement

4. An IDS was filed on 8/31/2006; and it is considered by the examiner.

Drawing Objection

5. The drawings were received on 8/31/2006. These drawings (2 REPLACEMENT SHEETS) are objected.

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the claimed unit/component (i.e., a parking assistance unit), and steps to assist parking must be shown or the features canceled from the claims. No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the

renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specifically, claims 12-13 are directed to a device for a vehicle; however, a drawing for these claimed features are not submitted. Independent claim 14 recites steps to park a vehicle; however, these steps are also not showed in submitted drawings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. Claims 12, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being vague for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The timing relationship between applying a steering torque and "the driver is guided by at least one artificial steering stop on the path for parking the vehicle" are not clearly disclosed (i.e., when/at what point of time to start performing a steering action in a maneuvering path).

Claims 14, and 12 contain a feature of "generating an artificial steering stop", and "using an artificial steering stop"; it is unclear about who to "generating an artificial steering stop", and how to "generating an artificial steering stop" according to applicant's claims.

7. Dependent claims 13, and 15-22 are objected because of dependencies.

Election/Restriction

8. After carefully consideration, the election to one of the following invention is deemed necessary. The delay of this requirement is also regretted by the current examiner of record.

9. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. § 121;

I. Claims 14-22, are drawn to a method for parking a vehicle comprising steps of using a steering torque, and dividing a maneuvering path length (note: these steps are inherently MUST HAVE STEPS for familiar “pavement-parallel” parkings), classified in US class 701, subclasses 41, 44.

II. Claims 12-13 are drawn to a device to assist parking, comprising physical units to autonomous parking/steering, classified in class 180, subclasses 199, 204, 44, 6.24.

10. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions Group II and Group I are related as product (i.e., a parking assistance device), and process of use said product. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP § 806.05(h)). In the instant case, the parking assisted method as claimed can be done by utilizing a different device/apparatus for assisting to achieve a steering angle deviation, or an ultrasonic signal, or a combination thereof .etc. for parking purposes (e.g., see US Pub. 20060069478, US Pub. 20050236201, US Pub. 20040267420, US Pub. 20040260439, US Pub. 20040257244, US Pat. 7155325 B2, US Pat. 7085634 B2, US Pat. 7069128 B2, US Pat. 7043346 B2, US Pat. 6424895 B1, US Pat. 6186259 B1, US Pat. 6170591 B1, US Pat. 6097314 A, US Pat. 6070684 A).

11. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classifications, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR § 1.143)

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CUONG H. NGUYEN whose telephone number is 571-272-6759 (email address: cuong.nguyen@uspto.gov). The examiner can be reached on 9:30 am - 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, THOMAS G. BLACK can be reached on 571-272-6956. The Rightfax number for the organization where this application is assigned is 571-273-6956.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Please provide support, with page and line numbers, for any amended or new claim in an effort to help advance prosecution; otherwise any new claim language that is introduced in an amended or new claim may be considered as new matter.

/CUONG H. NGUYEN/
Primary Examiner

Art Unit: 3661

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